

AMENDMENTS TO THE SPECIFICATION:

Please amend the paragraph beginning at page 1, line 7, as follows:

As well known in the art, the process for producing kraft pulp basically comprises: (A) a cooking step of treating raw chips with a cooking liquor containing sodium hydroxide and sodium sulfide as main components to convert the chips into pulp; (B) a pulp washing step of washing the resultant pulp, and separating and recovering a black solution containing sodium carbonate and sodium sulfate, which are turned from the cooking liquor; (C) a pulp bleaching step of treating the pulp with a bleaching agent in the presence of alkali; (D) a black solution concentrating step of concentrating the black solution separated and recovered in the pulp washing step (B); (E) a black solution combustion step of burning the concentrated black solution to reduce sodium sulfate into sodium sulfide and further recovering sodium sulfate and sodium carbonate from a combustion exhaust gas by a dust collector; and (F) a ~~caustification~~causticization step of treating a green solution as an aqueous solution of a smelted product recovered in the combustion step with calcium oxide to convert sodium carbonate contained in the green solution into sodium hydroxide, thereby obtaining a white solution, wherein the white solution recovered in the ~~caustification~~causticization step (F) is recycled to the cooking step (A).

Please amend the paragraph beginning at page 6, line 9, as follows:

To accomplish the aim, in a first aspect of the present invention, there is provided a process for producing kraft pulp, which comprises (A) a cooking step of treating raw chips with a cooking liquor containing sodium hydroxide and sodium sulfide as main components to convert the chips into pulp; (B) a pulp washing step of washing the resultant pulp, and separating and recovering a black solution containing sodium carbonate and sodium sulfate, which are

turned from the cooking liquor, therefrom; (C) a pulp bleaching step of treating the pulp with a bleaching agent in the presence of alkali; (D) a black solution concentrating step of concentrating the black solution separated and recovered in the pulp washing step (B); (E) a black solution combustion step of burning the concentrated black solution to reduce the sodium sulfate into sodium sulfide and further capturing and recovering ashes containing sodium sulfate and sodium carbonate from a combustion exhaust gas generated therein by a dust collector; and (F) a ~~causitification~~causticization step of treating a green solution as an aqueous solution of a smelted product recovered from the combustion step with calcium oxide to reduce sodium carbonate contained in the green solution to sodium hydroxide, thereby obtaining a white solution, the white solution recovered in the ~~causitification~~causticization step (F) being recycled to the cooking step (A);

the process further comprising:

(G) a potassium ion removal step of flowing an aqueous solution containing the ashes captured and recovered from the combustion exhaust gas generated in the black solution combustion step (E) by the dust collector through a packed bed filled with a Na-type cation exchange resin to adsorb and remove potassium ions contained in the aqueous solution; and

(H) a regeneration step of treating the cation exchange resin used in the potassium ion removal step (G) with an aqueous sodium hydroxide solution to regenerate the cation exchange resin,

wherein a fraction recovered from the potassium ion removal step (G), which contains a large amount of sodium sulfate and sodium carbonate, is recycled to the black solution concentrating step (D), and a sodium hydroxide effluent recovered from the regeneration step (H) is recycled to the bleaching step (C).

Please amend the paragraph beginning at page 8, line 5, as follows:

The process for producing kraft pulp according to the present invention basically comprises (A) a cooking step, (B) a pulp washing step, (C) a pulp bleaching step, (D) a black solution concentrating step, (E) a black solution combustion step and (F) a ~~causitification~~causticization step. These steps may be conducted under known conditions.

Please amend the paragraph beginning at page 11, line 1, as follows:

In the ~~causitification~~causticization step (F), a green solution as an aqueous solution of the smelted product recovered from the combustion step is treated with calcium oxide to convert sodium carbonate contained in the green solution into sodium hydroxide, thereby obtaining a white solution. Meanwhile, the calcium oxide is converted into lime sludge. Also, although not shown in FIG. 1, the ~~causitification~~causticization step (F) may further include a step of removing sludge from a milk solution (emulsion) containing the lime sludge to obtain a purified white solution, a step of burning the thus separated and removed lime sludge in a kiln to convert the sludge into calcium oxide again, or the like. The white solution converted in the ~~causitification~~causticization step (F) is reused as a cooking liquor in the cooking step (A).